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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Attachment No.

June 7, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: National Reconnaissance Program

Enclosed herewith is the text of recommendations on the subject which were recently made to the President by his Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, together with comments thereon submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence on April 15, 1963.

The President has approved the recommendations and it is requested that you furnish to this office and to the Board by September 15, 1963, a report reflecting the status of the national reconnaissance program as of that date, and progress made in meeting the objectives of the Board's recommendations.

*McGeorge Bundy*  
McGeorge Bundy

Enclosures  
(for the Secretary of Defense only)

cc: Director of Central Intelligence  
The President's Foreign Intelligence  
Advisory Board

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD

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Toward an Effective National Reconnaissance Office. The Director of Central Intelligence has made available to the Board a draft of a proposed "Agreement Between the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence on the Management of the National Reconnaissance Program." In the judgment of the Board, this draft agreement is the best conceived and most soundly detailed plan for the management, the mission and the operation of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) that has come to our attention. We urgently recommend its immediate adoption.

In the course of implementing the agreement and in carrying out its plan we recommend, in addition, that:

(a) a clear channel of guidance and authorization flow from the policy decisions of the President to the Secretary of Defense and, as provided in the agreement, to the Director of Central Intelligence;

(b) a clear and effective connection be established between the advance technology and planning of the national reconnaissance program, and the development plans for reconnaissance capabilities of the Department of Defense and the military services;

(c) plans be made to improve the continuity of management of the NRO, particularly with respect to career specialists who may be heavily taxed in meeting schedules for new satellites, aircraft and other reconnaissance instrumentalities;

(d) pains be taken to ensure consistency between Department of Defense directives which guide the national reconnaissance program and pertinent directives emanating from higher authority, such as National Security Council Intelligence Directives; and

(e) within the Department of Defense present and planned relationships be clarified as between the NRO, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

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COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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The agreement on the NRO has now been completed and is in the process of implementation. This agreement, in my opinion, establishes a clear channel of guidance and clarifies the relationships and responsibilities between the Department of Defense and CIA, both of whom have serious responsibilities in this field. The agreement will ensure that there is close coordination and intense effort in advanced technology and planning of the national reconnaissance program and also the current reconnaissance efforts. We will watch closely the management of the NRO and ensure that this program is now successful in every respect.

The new agreement on the NRO provides for close relationships between the NRO and the United States Intelligence Board.

With respect to the specific recommendations on the subject, they encompass a number of obvious management problems. The arrangements for handling these problems are outlined in the recently executed NRO agreement. The carrying out of this agreement in an effective manner depends on close collaboration between the DCI and the Secretary of Defense. It should be noted that there is a natural interface between CIA and the Department of Defense in the vital and complicated area of overhead reconnaissance. Management of this problem calls also for close collaboration between responsible authorities in both departments.

The new agreement which is being implemented was reached after due consideration of the possibility of either Defense or CIA taking full responsibility for the reconnaissance program. It was decided that this would be unwise because on the one hand it would involve relocating vast resources from the Department of Defense. On the other hand it would involve a loss of responsibility and imaginativeness which exists in CIA and which has made many valuable contributions in the field of overhead reconnaissance. Moreover, transfer from CIA would run the risk of losing a vantage for secrecy which the Agency is so well qualified to protect.

The NRO agreement has been drafted with all the above factors in mind, and I concur in the judgment of the Board that it is a well conceived and soundly detailed plan for the management of this important program.

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